

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the rejections set forth in the office action dated August 8, 2005 and in the advisory action dated December 22, 2005 is respectfully requested. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the courtesy of the telephone conferences engaged on January 9, 2006 and January 12, 2006. Pursuant to those discussions, applicant has cancelled claims 1-8, 11, 12, and 16-19 all without prejudice. Claim 20 has been withdrawn without prejudice. Applicant has amended claims 9 and 12 to overcome the Examiner's §112 objections as well as the Examiner's §§102 and 103 rejections. These amendments are supported in the original specification. Thus, no new matter has been added by way of this amendment. Claims 9 and 12 are currently pending.

Again, applicant appreciates the indication of allowability of claims 11 and 12 if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Rejection of Claims 1-12 and 16-19 Under 35 U.S.C. Section 112

The Examiner rejected claims 1-12 and 16-19 under 35 U.S.C. Section 112, second paragraph, as being allegedly indefinite for failing to particularly point out an distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner noted, in particular, that claims referred to one or both of an inner "split" ball and an outer "split" ball, whereas the specification provides for a split ball arrangement having a stationary inner ball and a moveable outer ball. Applicant has addressed the Examiner's rejection by amending the claims to remove the term "split". For example, claim 1 now recites a "housing means having inner ball means and outer ball means mounted therein" Applicant respectfully asserts that this amendment clarifies the claims and overcomes the §112 rejection.

The Examiner also objected to the recitation of "said securing arrangement" in claim 11. Applicant has now canceled claim 11, and incorporated its limitations into claim 9. Applicant has addressed the Examiner's concerns over the "said securing arrangement" recitation by now reciting a "first securing arrangement" and a "second securing arrangement" in claim 9. Applicant respectfully asserts that this amendment clarifies claim 9 and overcomes the §112 rejection.

The Examiner objected to the phrase "a block like base unit", specifically noting that the term "like" allegedly renders the scope of the claims unascertainable. This objection is moot now that applicant has canceled claim 16 without prejudice.

With respect to claim 18, the Examiner objected to the phrase "a plurality of mounting surfaces and having mounted therein a plurality of lockable split balls." This objection is moot now that applicant has canceled claim 18 without prejudice.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103

The Examiner rejected claims 9-10, 18, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(b) as being anticipated by Aaras et al. (4,277,102), and claims 1-9, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious in view of various combinations of patents. Applicant has canceled claims 1-8, 10, 11 and 16-19 without prejudice. Therefore the rejection of those claims is now moot.

The Examiner indicated the allowability of claims 11 and 12 if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Prior to this amendment, claim 12 depended from claim 11, claim 11 depended from claim 10 and claim 10 depended from independent claim 9. Applicant has amended independent claim 9 to incorporate the limitations of claims 10 and 11.

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Accordingly, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 9 is now in condition for allowance.

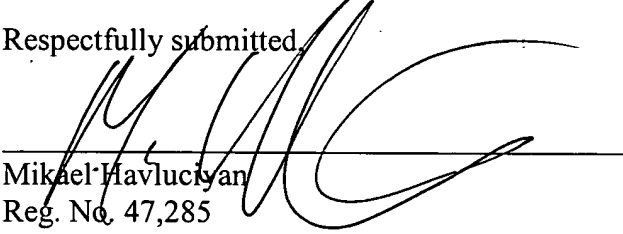
Claim 12 depends from claim 9, and is allowable for at least that reason.

Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are now in condition for allowance and respectfully request the same. If the Examiner has any questions regarding the foregoing, he is cordially invited to contact the undersigned so that any such matters may be promptly resolved.

Enclosed is a \$450.00 check for the Petition for Extension of Time fee for response within the third month. Please note that an Extension of Time for response within the first month (\$60) was previously paid December 8, 2005. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: January 12, 2006


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